

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DODE-00 /052 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/ARP - MR. DICKMAN

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

----- 050611

O 282200Z JUL 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 28

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JULY 28,
1976:

Q. THEN IN THE UNITED STATES' CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES WITH
THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION AND POSSIBLY OTHER
PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS, HAVE THERE BEEN ANY DISCUSSIONS
BEYOND SECURITY?

A. NO.

Q. ANY OTHER SUBJECT BEYOND SECURITY?

A. NO. THE CONTACT HAS STRICTLY BEEN BETWEEN THE
EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER AND THE PLO.

Q. WELL, I UNDERSTAND WHO'S AT THE CONTACT POINT, BUT DID
THEY DISCUSS ANYTHING BEYOND SECURITY?

A. NO.
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Q. DID THEY DISCUSS THE SECURITY OF AMERICANS LIVING THERE
AS WELL AS THE SECURITY OF OFFICIAL PERSONNEL -- CORRECT?

A. WELL --

Q. IS THAT WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO --

A. -- I WANT TO CHECK ON THAT, BUT IT HAS BEEN MY UNDER-
STANDING THAT THE CONTACT HAS BEEN CONCERNING EMBASSY
PERSONNEL. IN OTHER WORDS, AS I THINK WE INDICATED
YESTERDAY, IT HAS BEEN IN CONNECTION WITH THE SECURITY OF
OUR PEOPLE AT OUR EMBASSY AND THEIR MOVEMENTS IN WEST
BEIRUT.

Q. BUT IF YOU COULD CHECK.

A. YES.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHY WE WEREN'T INFORMED -- AND, OF COURSE, WE'RE JUST STAND-INS FOR THE PUBLIC -- WHY THE PUBLIC WASN'T INFORMED ABOUT THE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO UNTIL A MONTH AFTER THEY HAD BEGUN? WHAT WENT INTO THAT DECISION TO KEEP US -- IF NOT ONLY INFORMED, TO KEEP US MISINFORMED, BY SAYING OUR POLICY IS NOT TO HAVE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO?

A. I WANT TO CHECK VERY CAREFULLY FROM THE TIME THAT THOSE DIRECT CONTACTS BEGAN WHETHER IN FACT WE WERE ASKED ABOUT IT.

Q. BUT I MEAN CERTAINLY YOU WERE -- THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF OUR CONTINUING INTEREST.

A. YES.

Q. THIS HAS HAPPENED BEFORE. I MEAN WE COULD ASK THE SAME 14 QUESTIONS EVERY DAY.

A. I UNDERSTAND THE POINT.

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Q. BUT THEY'RE KIND OF LIVE AND ON THE TABLE. BUT, TO THE LARGER QUESTION, WHY DIDN'T YOU VOLUNTEER IT, IF THAT'S THE POINT -- OR NOT NECESSARILY, BUT WHY DID THE STATE DEPARTMENT KEEP THE PUBLIC UNINFORMED ABOUT UNPRECEDENTED CONTACTS WITH THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION?

A. IT WAS CERTAINLY CLEAR THAT WE WERE HAVING CONTACTS WITH THEM ON THE SECURITY MATTERS. WE SAID THEY WERE INDIRECT. NOW, I DO NOT KNOW -- I AM NOT ABLE TO ANSWER WHY WE DID NOT VOLUNTEER THAT PARTICULAR BIT OF INFORMATION.

Q. THE QUESTION WAS ASKED REPEATEDLY LAST FRIDAY.

A. I KNOW, AND ON FRIDAY IT WAS CONFIRMED THAT WE DID HAVE DIRECT CONTACTS.

Q. IT WAS FIRST STATED THAT THERE WAS NO DIRECT CONTACT, AND IT WAS LATER STATED -- I THINK THE LATER EXPLANATION WAS NOT THAT THERE WERE DIRECT CONTACTS BUT SIMPLY THAT THE PALESTINIANS CONTROLLED AN AREA OF BEIRUT, AND IT WAS LEFT TO DRAW A CERTAIN CONCLUSION OF DIRECT CONTACT.

A. YES.

Q. I WOULD BE CURIOUS ABOUT THIS: SUPPOSING SOMEONE WERE TO DISCOVER THAT IN FACT THE RECORDS STATED ANY NUMBER OF TIMES SINCE LATE JUNE THAT FROM THAT PODIUM IT WAS STATED THAT THERE WAS NO DIRECT CONTACT. WOULD YOU OFFER A PUBLIC APOLOGY? OR WOULD THAT JUST BE PART OF THE JOB?

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER I WOULD MAKE A PUBLIC APOLOGY OR NOT. I WOULD HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THAT.

Q. BUT, BOB --

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER IT IS SOMETHING THAT REQUIRES A PUBLIC APOLOGY.

Q. WELL, THERE WOULD BE, IF IT WAS A LIE FROM THAT PODIUM, WOULDN'T IT? I MEAN, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY UP THERE IS NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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TO LIE TO THE PRESS.

A. NO, AND I DO NOT.

Q. YOU TRY NOT TO.

A. AND I NEVER HAVE.

Q. OKAY. BUT THE POINT THAT I AM TRYING TO STATE IS THAT IF THERE IS A STATEMENT FROM THAT PODIUM THAT THERE WAS NO DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE PLO SINCE LATE JUNE, THAT WOULD BE, IN EFFECT, A LIE, WOULDN'T IT?

A. I THINK THAT THE WORD "LIE" SUGGESTS THAT THE PERSON WHO IS STATING INFORMATION IS DELIBERATELY PROVIDING FALSE INFORMATION.

Q. IT CERTAINLY IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SPOKESMAN IS USED TO CONVEY AN OFFICIAL LIE. THAT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE.

A. LET US CHECK THE RECORD.

Q. OKAY.

Q. BUT REALLY THEN, THE CONSIDERATION IS WHAT I WAS DRIVING AT, THE ONE BEHIND IT, WHY THAT BUREAU, OR HIGHER THAN THAT, THOUGHT IT ISN'T IMPORTANT TO TELL THE PEOPLE THAT YOU ARE HAVING TRUCK WITH THE PLO.

Q. DO WE KNOW WHO KILLED AMBASSADOR MELOY AND COUNSELOR WARING?

A. NO.

Q. DO WE THINK THE PLO DOES?

A. THE PLO HAS PUBLICLY STATED THAT THEY TOOK SOME PEOPLE -- APPREHENDED SOME PEOPLE.

Q. WELL, WHILE WE ARE CONCERNED WITH THE SECURITY OF UNCLASSIFIED

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THE EMBASSY PEOPLE IN BEIRUT, WHY HAVEN'T WE ASKED THE PLO WHO THEY HAVE AND WHO THEY THINK MIGHT HAVE KILLED MELOY, MR. WARING, AND THEIR DRIVER?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. I KNOW THAT WE CERTAINLY ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT, AS MR. DAY SAID YESTERDAY IN HIS TESTIMONY, TO DETERMINE THE FACTS IN THAT CASE.

Q. BUT I THINK WHEN THAT QUESTION CAME UP, HE LEFT IT THAT IT WAS A SENSITIVE MATTER.

Q. IT IS A SENSITIVE MATTER.

Q. ALL RIGHT, I KNOW IT IS SENSITIVE, BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS, WHY DON'T WE ASK THEM?

A. LET ME LOOK INTO THAT.

Q. ON AMBASSADOR MELOY'S MURDER AGAIN, FOLLOWING UP BARRY'S QUESTIONING, IS THERE NOT SOME INCONSISTENCY IN

THE PUBLIC POSITION THAT THE UNITED STATES IS DOING EVERYTHING IT CAN AND THE STATEMENT THAT THE UNITED STATES SO FAR HAS NOT GONE TO THE PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE THE MURDERERS, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE PRECEDENT HAS NOW BEEN SET FOR DEALING WITH THEM?

A. I SAID I WOULD LOOK INTO THAT.

Q. DOES THE DEPARTMENT KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE SUSPECTED OF KILLING AMBASSADOR MELOY? ARE THEY STILL BEING HELD BY THE PEOPLE WHO CAPTURED THEM?

A. THAT IS MY UNDERSTANDING.

Q. THEY ARE STILL BEING HELD. THERE WAS TALK ABOUT THEIR BEING TURNED OVER TO THE ARAB OCCUPATION FORCE.

A. THAT WAS IN THE ORIGINAL PUBLIC STATEMENT, YES.

Q. THAT HAS NOT BEEN DONE, TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE.

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A. NOT TO MY KNOWLEDGE.

Q. DO THEY KNOW THEIR NATIONALITY, PUTATIVE NATIONALITY?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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